

REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

A Guide for Schools

Why: **MCA 41-3-201**— When professionals know or have reasonable cause to suspect, as a result of information they receive in their professional or official capacity, that a child is abused or neglected by anyone regardless of whether the person suspected of causing the abuse or neglect is a parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare, they shall report the matter promptly.

How: *Report all concerns to the: **Child Abuse Hotline (24-hour Toll Free Number) at 1-866-820-5437.***

When to Report:

As soon as possible – please don't wait until the end of the school day.

When a child confides in you about an unsafe situation at home;

When a child has bruises or marks that they say they received from an adult; and/or

When a child's behavior or appearance causes you to suspect problems at home.

What to Report:

- ✓ The names and addresses of the child and his or her parent or persons responsible for his or her care;
- ✓ To the extent known, the child's age, the nature and extent of the child's injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries;
- ✓ Any other information that might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries or showing the willful neglect and the identity of the person or persons responsible;
- ✓ The facts that led the person reporting to believe that the child has suffered injury or injuries or willful neglect.
- ✓ How the information was obtained –i.e., from observation, child confided in you, another child told you, etc.
- ✓ Describe how the child functions/behaves on a regular basis and if this has changed recently.
- ✓ What you know about the family – other children in the home, parents, extended family, who may be a resource to the child or who may have more information about the situation you are reporting.

What to Expect after you Report: The Centralized Intake Toll Free 24-hour, Child Abuse and Neglect Report Hotline worker should tell you if the report will be referred to a Child Protection Specialist (CPS) or Law Enforcement – depending on the allegations, for investigation.

The CPS worker will contact you for a follow-up interview.

The CPS worker is not allowed to divulge the results of the investigation due to confidentiality statutes.

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